5. Government have been appropriately and effectively bringing to the attention of the international community facts pertaining to Pakistan's continued sponsorship of cross border terrorism in India, and the sponsorship and support provided by it to terrorists and fugitives from law.

Bangladesh

6. The Government of India is aware of the reports that agencies inimical to India's interests, including the ISI, are misusing the territory of Bangladesh for their anti-India activities. The Government of India has been regularly taking up these security-related issues with Bangladesh at different levels through diplomatic channels and institutional mechanisms existing between the two countries. The Bangladesh Government has officially stated that it will not allow undesirable elements to use its territory for activities prejudicial to the security interests of India.

Malaysia and the Philippines

7. The Government of India approach the Governments of Malaysia and the Philippines to seek their co-operation, as needed.

Interests of Indian Businessmen in Zimbabwe

5327. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Hindustan Times' dated the 26th April 2002 under the caption "Indians are looters in Zimbabwe";

(b) whether the Indian businessmen in Zimbabwe have been facing the wrath of their militia who have asked them to hand over their properties;

(c) whether Government have taken up the matter with the Government of Zimbabwe to safeguard interests of the Indians in that country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes,

(b) No, Sir. The Acting Chairman of the Zimbabwe National Liberation

War Veteran. Associations has asked the Indian community to ignore the threats and ultimatums issued by the Association's Secretary for Projects. There has been no panic or concern expressed by the Indian community in Zimbabwe.

(c) and (d) The Government of India through the High Commission of India in Harare has taken up the matter with the Government of Zimbabwe and has been assured that the latter would safeguard the interest of the Indian community in Zimbabwe.

Applications pending with passport offices in Punjab

5328. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending for issue of passport with the passport offices in Punjab;

(b) since when, these are pending; and

(c) by when, these are likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) The number of applications pending for issue of passport with the two Passport Offices in Punjab as on 30-04-02 is indicated below Passport Office-wise. An application is considered pending after clear police verification report has been received and the application is complete in all respects.

Regional Passport Office, Chandigarh	—	2707
Passport Office, Jalandhar	—	Nil

(b) and (c) Passports are normally issued within 10 days of receipt of clear police verification reports. Passport Office Chandigarh has been instructed to clear all the pending cases at the earliest.

Opening of Canadian Consulate Office in Punjab

5329. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal is pending to start a consulate office of Canadian High Commission in Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if so, the details thereof and by when it is likely to be started?